Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Overview:

Emergency stabilization protects life, property and natural resources from additional damage after a fire. A key part of protecting human life and property following a fire is an early warning system that measures precipitation levels and alerts residents downstream of potential landslides or floods. Emergency stabilization work must be completed within one year after the fire, and includes early soil stabilization, invasive species treatments, and adapting drainage features to handle predicted floods.

Post-fire rehabilitation work improves lands that are unlikely to recover naturally from the effects of wildfires. The work, often implemented over the course of several years following a wildfire, includes reforestation, road and trail rehabilitation, fence replacement, fish and wildlife habitat restoration, invasive plant treatments, and replanting and reseeding with native or other desirable vegetation.

Rehabilitation and Restoration Budget Summary (dollars in thousands)

Agency	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004
USDA Forest Service	$141,688	$62,668	$7,078	$6,914
Dept of the Interior	$66,769	$40,000	$19,870	$36,523
Total	**$208,457**	**$102,668**	**$26,948***	**$43,437**

***The Department of the Interior has an additional $15.1 million in carryover funding from FY2002.**

Fires in 2004 burned more than 8 million acres nationally across all ownerships. Some of these fires severely affected forest and rangeland resources, creating the need for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation on thousands of acres of forest and rangeland and hundreds of miles of streams, roads, and trails.

Emergency stabilization work in response to the fires of 2004 included reseeding burned areas, installing larger culverts to handle increased water flows, and stabilizing slopes with log structures, straw wattles, and straw mulch. Additional benefits from emergency stabilization treatments included enforcement and education to protect sensitive ecosystems damaged by wildland fire, site stabilization to protect oil and gas transmission lines from landslides, and protecting water quality by cleaning up hazardous waste in floodplains.

In FY 2004, National Fire Plan funding was used for 657 rehabilitation projects on federal lands in 17 states. These projects treated nearly 2.5 million acres through invasive plant control, cone and seed collection, seeding, planting, and watershed improvements. More than 11,600 miles of trail reconstruction, roadwork, riparian enhancement, fencing, and boundary line location were completed, in addition to repair or replacement of recreation facilities, water systems, road culverts, TES habitat structures, and other facilities and infrastructure.

Research is being conducted to enhance rehabilitation treatments for plants native to burned areas. Part of the research includes increasing the availability of varieties of native plant materials that are more site-specific and better able to compete with non-native invasive species. Additionally, methods of planting for maximum success are being researched.